

Claims

1. A door exposed to an atmosphere of air, comprising:
a door member;
a door panel that is movable relative to the door member;
an inflatable seal between the door member and the door panel, wherein the inflatable seal defines an air inlet, an air outlet, and an elongate air passageway therebetween; and
a blower connected in fluid communication with the inflatable seal such that the blower forces the air in series flow from the atmosphere, through the air inlet, through the elongate air passageway, through the air outlet, and back to the atmosphere.
2. The door of claim 1, wherein the door member is a second door panel that is movable.
3. The door of claim 1, wherein the door is associated with a wall that helps define a doorway, and the door member is stationary and adjacent to the wall.
4. The door of claim 1, wherein the door is associated with a wall and a floor that define a doorway, and the door member is an upwardly facing surface of the floor.
5. The door of claim 4, wherein the air outlet is situated to discharge the air toward the floor, whereby the air discharged from the outlet may help keep the floor dry.
6. The door of claim 1, wherein the air inlet, the air outlet, and the elongate passageway remain in fluid communication with the atmosphere when the door is closed.
7. The door of claim 1, wherein the blower continues to force air through the air passageway when the door is open.
8. The door of claim 1, wherein the blower moves with the door panel.
9. The door of claim 1, further comprising a flexible hose that couples the blower to the inflatable seal.
10. The door of claim 1, wherein the door panel translates relative to the door member.
11. The door of claim 1, wherein the door panel includes an upper edge and a substantially vertical edge, and the inflatable seal includes an L-shaped section that is adjacent to the upper edge and the substantially vertical edge.

12. The door of claim 1, wherein the door panel includes a lower edge and a substantially vertical edge, and the inflatable seal includes an L-shaped section that extends along the lower edge and the substantially vertical edge.

13. The door of claim 1, wherein the air at the air inlet is warmer than the air at the air outlet.

14. The door of claim 1, further comprising a heater in heat transfer relationship with the air being forced through the inflatable seal.

15. The door of claim 1, further comprising thermal insulation disposed inside the elongate air passageway.

16. The door of claim 15, wherein the elongate air passageway includes some areas that are more thermally insulated than other areas of the elongate air passageway.

17. The door of claim 1, wherein the inflatable seal is comprised of a porous material.

18. A door exposed to an atmosphere of air, comprising:

a door member;

a door panel that includes a substantially horizontal edge and a substantially vertical edge, wherein the door panel translates relative to the door member;

an inflatable seal between the door member and the door panel, wherein the inflatable seal includes an L-shaped section that is adjacent to the substantially horizontal edge and the substantially vertical edge, and wherein the inflatable seal defines an air inlet, an air outlet, and an elongate air passageway therebetween; and

a blower connected in fluid communication with the inflatable seal such that the blower forces the air in series flow from the atmosphere, through the air inlet, through the elongate air passageway, through the air outlet, and back to the atmosphere, wherein the air at the air inlet is warmer than the air at the air outlet.

19. The door of claim 18, wherein the door member is a second door panel that is movable.

20. The door of claim 18, wherein the door is associated with a wall that helps define a doorway, and the door member is stationary and adjacent to the wall.

21. The door of claim 18, wherein the door is associated with a wall and a floor that define a doorway, and the door member is an upwardly facing surface of the floor.
22. The door of claim 18, wherein the air inlet, the air outlet, and the elongate passageway remain in fluid communication with the atmosphere when the door is closed.
23. The door of claim 18, wherein the blower continues to force air through the air passageway when the door is open.
24. The door of claim 18, wherein the blower moves with the door panel.
25. The door of claim 18, further comprising a flexible hose that couples the blower to the inflatable seal.
26. The door of claim 18, further comprising a heater disposed between the blower and the air inlet.
27. The door of claim 18, wherein the inflatable seal is comprised of a porous material.
28. A method of using an inflatable seal to help seal a door panel that is movable relative to a door member, wherein the door panel helps shield a first area of colder air from a second area of warmer air, and the inflatable seal is between the door panel and the door member and is also between the first area and the second area, the method comprising:

simultaneously forcing the warmer air from the second area into the inflatable seal, conveying the warmer air through the inflatable seal, and discharging the warmer air from the inflatable seal back into the second area.
29. The method of claim 28, further comprising sliding the door panel across the inflatable seal.
30. The method of claim 28, further comprising conveying the warmer air from a blower to the inflatable seal via a flexible hose.
31. The method of claim 28, further comprising forcing the warmer air through the inflatable seal while the door panel is at an open position.
32. The method of claim 28, further comprising cooling the warmer air as the warmer air travels through the inflatable seal.
33. A door, comprising:

a door member;

a door panel that is movable relative to the door member;

a pliable seal between the door member and the door panel, wherein the pliable seal defines an elongate passageway therebetween;

a fluid disposed inside the pliable seal; and

a fluid mover having an inlet and an outlet in fluid communication with the elongate passageway, wherein the fluid mover forces the fluid to circulate in series through the outlet, through the elongate passageway, through the inlet, and back through the fluid mover.

34. The door of claim 33, wherein the fluid mover is a pump.

35. The door of claim 33, wherein the fluid mover is a blower.

36. The door of claim 33, further comprising a heater in heat transfer relationship with the fluid.

37. The door of claim 33, wherein the door member is a second door panel that is movable.

38. The door of claim 33, wherein the door is associated with a wall that helps define a doorway, and the door member is stationary and adjacent to the wall.

39. The door of claim 33, wherein the door is associated with a wall and a floor that define a doorway, and the door member is an upwardly facing surface of the floor.

40. The door of claim 33, further comprising thermal insulation disposed inside the elongate passageway.

41. The door of claim 40, wherein the elongate passageway includes some areas that are more thermally insulated than other areas of the elongate passageway.

42. A door, comprising:

a door member;

a door panel that is movable relative to the door member;

a pliable seal between the door member and the door panel, wherein the pliable seal defines an elongate passageway therebetween;

a fluid disposed inside the pliable seal; and

a heater in heat transfer relationship with the fluid.

43. The door of claim 42, wherein the heater is disposed inside the elongate passageway.
44. The door of claim 42, wherein the fluid is pressurized.
45. The door of claim 42, wherein the door member is a second door panel that is movable.
46. The door of claim 42, wherein the door is associated with a wall that helps define a doorway, and the door member is stationary and adjacent to the wall.
47. The door of claim 42, wherein the door is associated with a wall and a floor that define a doorway, and the door member is an upwardly facing surface of the floor.
48. The door of claim 42, further comprising thermal insulation disposed inside the elongate passageway.
49. The door of claim 48, wherein the elongate passageway includes some areas that are more thermally insulated than other areas of the elongate passageway.